

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-27 (cancelled)

28. (currently amended) A process of preparing an aqueous crystalline biogenic silica comprising the steps of:

a) incinerating a silica bearing organic source at a temperature from about 700°C up to about 1200°C for a time period for the silica to be ~~substantially~~ in a crystalline form and free of carbon, and allowing the incinerated silica organic source to cool;

b) adding the incinerated and cooled silica bearing organic source to an alkaline solution that has either been preheated to a temperature up to about 65°C or to be heated with the added organic source to a temperature up to about 65°C, the alkaline solution being contained in a vessel and having a pH from 12 up to 14;

c) applying heat and pressure so that the added organic source and the alkaline solution in the vessel are at a temperature between 100°C and up to about 300°C for 1 to 4 hours, thereby forming an opaque aqueous crystalline biogenic silica

with a pH from 12 to 14 and undissolved impurities derived from the added organic source; and

d) extracting the opaque aqueous crystalline biogenic silica from the vessel.

29. (currently amended) The process according to claim 28, wherein the silica bearing organic source is selected from ~~one or a combination of two or more of group comprising~~ at least one of the group consisting of rice hulls, wheat hulls, and herbs with a high level of silica.

30. (previously presented) The process according to claim 29, wherein the herbs include *urtica dioica* (stinging nettle) and *Equisetum* (horsetail).

31. (currently amended) The process according to claim 28, wherein the added silica bearing organic source constitutes 2 to 22% by weight, and the alkaline solution constitute 3 to 8% by weight of an hydroxide or hydroxides and 70 to 95% by weight of water.

32. (currently amended) The process according to claim 31, wherein the hydroxides are selected from hydroxides of sodium, lithium, potassium, rubidium, cesium and francium.

33. (currently amended) The process according to claim 31, wherein the added silica bearing organic source is in a proportion of about 320g of incinerated rice hulls to the alkaline solution of about 160g of an hydroxide or hydroxides and 3 litre of water.

34. (currently amended) The process according to claim 28, wherein the vessel is pressurised so that the heat is applied at a relatively high pressure therein.

35. (currently amended) The process according to claim 34, wherein the vessel has an open top which is covered by a lockable lid with a pressure release valve arranged for releasing excessive pressure within the vessel.

36.-47. (canceled)